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Firm Aide Is Quizzed At B26 Smuggling Trial

A Rochester man, whose concern deals in second-hand bombsights, machine guns and machine gun mounts, underwent searching examination Friday in the Federal Court trial of three men accused of smuggling B26 bombers to Portugal.

Jerome Bachman, warehouse manager for Morris Diamond Associates of Rochester, took the stand in the trial of John R. Hawke, Count Henri M. F. de-Montmarin and Woodrow W. Roderick.

These three are accused of smuggling B26s, World War II vintage attack bombers, to the Portuguese for use against African rebels in the colonies of Angola and Mozambique.

Defense Atty. Edwin Marger of Miami Beach, Fla., obviously intrigued by this lively trade in old military equipment, asked Bachman:

"Would you use a Norden bombsight in a private plane?"

"No," replied Bachman. "People buy them for the parts. They strip them down and take the parts out."

Gears, Gyroscopes

The Norden sight, one of the best-kept secrets of World War II, contains all sorts of small gears and gyroscopes.

"Can anyone walk in and buy bombsights and machine guns?" the defense attorney asked.

"Bombsights, yes; machine guns, no," Bachman responded.

Hawke, 28, a former RAF pilot now living in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., is accused of flying seven of the old B26s to Portugal.

Count deMontmarin, 58, a tall, distinguished-looking Paris businessman, ordered the aircraft for a Swiss firm. He has contended he thought export licenses had been obtained by Gregory R. Board, 45, a onetime Tucson, Ariz., businessman who fled the U.S. before he could be arrested.

Roderick, 47, is a former Winnipeg, Man., businessman who now lives in the U.S.

Sought Gunsights

Previous testimony indicated that Keat E. Griggers, 42, of

Jamestown, Calif., a mechanic indicted in the B26 scheme but who was later let off, went shopping at Morris Diamond for gunsights, gun mounts and ammunition boxes for B26s.

Bombsights were not mentioned from the stand, though they were cited in the indictment.

The government contends the three defendants conspired to fly 20 of the twin-engined Douglas B26s to Portugal and actually delivered the seven. Spare parts and weapon fittings were flown over in a cargo plane, the government says.

Bachman testified Morris Diamond even sold bombsights to the U.S. Air Force, for whom the sights were manufactured on contract in the first place.

Also at issue in the trial is a long-range fuel tank sold by the Rochester firm and mounted in the bomb bay of a B26 that passed through Western New York on its way to Canada and, finally, Portugal.

Sales Chief Testifies

Jack S. Bachman, brother of Jerome and sales manager for Morris Diamond, also testified. He told U.S. Atty. John T. Curtin that Morris Diamond normally would notify the State Department when it sold items forbidden for export under the Munitions Control Act.

Another witness was Raymond J. Miller, an employee of Page Airways Inc., Rochester, the firm which installed the long-range tank in a B26. Miller recalled a casual conversation he had with Hawke in May, 1965, as the tank was being installed at Rochester-Monroe County Airport.

"I asked what they (Hawke and Griggers) were doing with the B26," Miller told Curtin.

"He said they were taking it to Montreal to have it converted into an executive aircraft."

Hawke has described the flights to Portugal in detail in articles he wrote for publication.

He has contended the scheme was secretly backed by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. Curtin has denied it.